

## **Education Governance Responses Bradford Meeting (1/16/07) – Oxbow Union High School \***

48 Attendees (facilitated by Robin Scheu, aided by Jill Remick and John Turner)

### **1. What are the most important results you want from our education system?**

All students proficient in core curriculum  
Students perform to their potential  
Parent involvement  
Cost containment  
Best education we can afford  
Life-long learners  
Critical thinkers  
Don't burn out volunteers – particularly school boards  
Don't burn out administrators  
Relevant materials  
Students to be technically adaptable to our world – not just MySpace & IM  
Students to be able to hold gainful employment  
Students to be safe arriving and leaving school and their school building  
Students to be considerate of their fellow human beings – locally & far away  
Students being cooperative and tolerant  
Students prepared for life after high school  
Students to be able to compete intellectually with our state, nation and other nations  
Responsibility and independence  
High academic achievement  
To instill in students by practice, example, and school culture, characteristics of caring, and respect for diversity  
Teach our children civility and how to add value to society  
Community members and parents as a vital part of the school  
Caring teachers  
Variety of opportunities for learning  
Exposure to all the possibilities available and a sense that these possibilities are attainable  
High standards and expectations  
Prepare socially as well as academically  
A desire for learning/ intellectually curious  
Adequacy of education regardless of money  
Students who understand that there is a big world out there and who want to explore it  
Respect of peers and elders  
Cost effective education for children that positions them to be productive & competitive with parental choice and vouchers  
To have our children be able to become valuable members in their communities  
Leave school being able to read, write, do math at a level that they are able to support themselves and their families.  
Healthy adults  
Practical problem solving ability

## Penmanship

Advanced students encouraged and given appropriate education

Experiential learning to engage all students

Close the gender gap – teach genders differently (?)

A curriculum that has continuity from year to year, as as students move from school to school

An education system that communicates with community members about need of the students at a local and state level

An education system with career paths in mind, including school staff and teachers

To give students an appreciation for the arts

Students prepared to live in an ever changing world

An education system, with local control, working with parents, the business world, and higher education.

Current technology for all students' use – technology literacy

Students excited about learning

Creative students

A cost effective system that supports all areas

Equitable taxes with accountability for expenditures

Taxes that are affordable so people can stay in the town they grew up in if that's their choice

Efficient use of public resources

A flexible system that can change/grow when necessary

Academic achievement for all students

Every child has an opportunity to succeed and reach potential

High rate of graduates prepared for secondary education

We want every student to succeed

A positive & safe learning environment for everyone

Every student finish high school somewhere – strive to end drop-out rate statewide

Information literacy – learning to find and evaluate information

A well rounded and thoughtful individual

Physical education skills and opportunities are important but secondary

People wanting to use our system

Diversity of education

Every student feeling a sense of belonging to their school

Graduates have a “global” view

Academic rigor – children prepared for the world beyond 12<sup>th</sup> grade

Sharing: costs, ideas, programs

Equal opportunity – to give a chance in life for every child

A caring altruistic populace

Schools that are responsive to community needs

Engage all students – don't lose mid-level students

Excellence across all academic disciplines

Offer multiple pathways for/or learning to accommodate different learning styles

Accountability for outcomes – student performance & learning

Maximize each child's achievement, whatever the path

Teach our children how to deal with a changing world  
Students who achieve their goals above and beyond expectations  
Students with self-esteem  
An ability to express an idea  
Emphasis on analytical skills as well as substantive knowledge  
Students staying in Vermont  
Foster independent learning for students  
Help students figure out where they can shine and help them do that  
An effective communications system that can be shared in a timely manner by all parts

## **2. What are the strengths and weakness of your local education system?**

### **Strengths:**

Desire for Learning – Intellectual curiosity  
Appreciation of quality – aesthetic sensitivity  
Structure sound learning processes/standards  
Wholesome and challenging learning atmosphere  
Schools represent disparate income levels  
Excellent and dedicated staff and administration  
Commitment to high level of educational goals while remembering the individual  
Positive direction for leadership  
Extra curricular activities  
Increasing connections with community  
Well maintained facilities  
Good community support  
Creative use of school budgets at individual school level  
Local involvement and control  
High school choice  
Local model  
Academic choices  
Diversity – from different towns and states  
Locally situated and controlled (in theory)  
Union district  
Local people can be involved on boards and schools  
Voter and board support of school needs  
Schools now reflect individual communities  
Safe environment for our students  
Small schools can address needs of individual kids  
School communities, service projects, internships, school-to-work, recreation, conservation  
Income sensitivity to help fund education – currently via property tax  
Encourage character development in our children  
Dedication to educational progress  
Increase awareness of curriculum choice to aid performance  
Developing unified standards

Qualified and effective school administrators  
Positive direction for curriculum alignment with standards  
School-wide effort to engage all students in learning and school community  
Close connection to the community  
Committed, involved, experienced teachers  
Overall, a safe school environment. Generally a healthy, friendly community  
Easy access to teachers and administration  
Caring school staff  
Wonderful volunteers  
Parent involvement in elementary school  
Friends of Oxbow  
Staff, administration and board committed to positive change and improvement in our school  
Willing to make changes to reach goals.

**Weaknesses:**

Complexity of education finance system  
Small scale  
Need more involvement from more teachers (some are wonderful)  
Lack of parent involvement  
Level of community involvement  
Discomfort for high school teachers in having parents in the classroom  
General public does not have a good idea about the strengths of Oxbow  
Low parent interest in education/lack of support at home  
Cost exceeds ability to pay, or will if no controls put in place  
High cost  
Small tax base  
Funding resources  
Seems to boil down to a cost vs quality conundrum  
Lack of technology and tools in schools  
Building is not in a village  
Poor test scores  
Middle and high school not accountable  
Facility weakness – old needs renovation or new structure  
Significant transient population  
Students not achieving as highly as higher income students  
Board not focused on educational achievement  
No high school  
Fast pace lifestyle limits overall focus on family involvement in education  
Local boards seem “outgunned” by state/federal requirements and statewide teachers union  
After-school late transportation so kids can participate in extra-curriculars  
Budget & community unable to meet the financial demands of oncoming technological equipment demands. We need to help our students become more advanced.  
Lack of technology tools  
Some students lack aspiration and motivation

Low expectations for students  
Potential for infighting among boards  
Possible redundancy among many small districts  
Inability to provide wide variety of options that meet the needs of all students  
Elementary schools need to teach similar ways so they are “equal” as possible in high school, then similar to other college students  
Not all kids know about their options and have the encouragement  
We need more support for those who have greater potential than their academic performance would indicate – starting early in grades and continuing to avoid more dropouts.  
More physical activity through all the grades  
Insufficient exposure to outside world beyond town, beyond VT, beyond USA  
School board policy needs revision  
Public desires more input & transparency in teacher salary/benefit negotiations  
Not sure how much of Board’s effort actually impacts classroom and ultimate outputs/ outcomes of education system.  
Young people can’t afford to stay in area – college educated kids don’t come back  
Local control vs. national/local standard  
School board burnout – too much for too few people to do  
Small communities have limited resources  
I like the school being close physically to where we live (within 10 miles)

### **3. What other information would you like us to know?**

Change the “leave no child behind” act and concentrate on early childhood, health and education of young “parents to be”, etc.  
Change the percentage of students with learning problems (decrease it and decrease costs)  
We did not talk at all about governance and the reasons for change, and what possible changes could be, plus the pros and cons.  
The meeting, as structured, was useless  
The Commissioner to talk (in person) about his concerns re: governance & what he thinks we should do about it.  
I would like to have more information on restructuring the system. I would like to ask that you maintain the school boards for each individual school to keep local control stable.  
Governance model – Why should it change?  
Consolidate, regionalize  
Keep system as is.  
Local control of small community schools supported by larger superintendents  
Public governance of all schools designated for public education – including private if so designated.  
Reducing number of supervisory unions to achieve administrative efficiencies is a positive goal.  
Keeping local representation is the challenge. One member per town on a school board will not be adequate representation.

**\*The Bradford meeting was the first meeting. Following this input the structure and questions at the meeting have been changed, and the Department will revisit Bradford on May 3.**